

# In the beginning

*One Billion Years Ago +*

“And God stepped out on space,  
and He looked around and said:  
I’m lonely—  
I’ll make me a world.”

James Weldon Johnson, 1927

More than a billion years ago, massive forces—shifting rock and sediment and the slow inland encroachment of seas—began to form the land now called Tennessee.

Approximately one billion years ago, Tennessee’s oldest known rocks, found only in the easternmost mountains, formed in a marine or coastal environment. They include the copper deposits of Polk County.

Middle Tennessee was invaded 500 – 570 million years ago by a shallow sea with hard-shelled organisms and primitive plants such as algae, the oldest discovered fossil remains.

Tennessee was propelled upward 435 – 500 million years ago, exposing marine sediments. Erosion produced numerous cave systems, sinkholes, and collapse structures that contain some of the world’s most important zinc deposits. The sea invaded again, and at the same time that the Smoky Mountains were being formed. Middle Tennessee was covered in ash from volcanoes in North Carolina and Virginia.

After uplift and erosion 360 – 410 million years ago in the middle and eastern lands, the sea returned to West Tennessee. After two more uplifts, several hundred thousand square miles of mud (later Chattanooga Shale) preserved the first land plants and animals with backbones, including ray fin fish and sharks.

Middle Tennessee was thrust upward again 435 million years ago, and rivers developed on the land surface.

The Cumberland Plateau oil and gas deposits originated 330 – 360 million years ago. Crinoids, animals resembling flowers with long stems, lived in large mounds on the sea floor. Later, coal swamps began forming along shorelines.

Shorelines advanced and retreated 290 – 330 million years ago, producing great swamps that were home to fish, reptiles, ferns, cane-like plants, rushes and reeds.

From 240 – 290 million years ago, ancient sediments deposited throughout the eastern United States were pushed into the Appalachian mountain range, with the Cumberland Plateau its western edge.

“Always wrapped in the illusory mists, always touching the evasive clouds, the peaks of the Great Smoky Mountains are like some barren ideal that has bartered for the vague isolations of a higher atmosphere the material values of the warm world below. Upon those mighty and majestic domes no tree strikes root, no hearth is alight, humanity is an alien thing....”

Mary Naoilles Murgree, pen name,

Charles Egbert Craddock, 1885

***240 Million Years Ago +***

The grand land features of Tennessee emerged, and a variety of marine life flourished in the sea covering part of the future fertile earth. As temperatures shifted dramatically, creatures now evidenced by exotic fossils roamed beside new rivers.

Uplift that began 240 million years ago was followed by erosion. This produced distinctive topographical features such as the Valley and Ridge of East Tennessee, Cumberland Plateau, Sequatchie Valley, and Highland Rim. The land surface in Middle Tennessee began dropping below sea level, and a sea ringed by lagoons, swamps, and forests was home to shelled organisms, marine fish, reptiles, and sea turtles. Land plants and trees appeared in West Tennessee.

A sea covered the Coastal Plain of West Tennessee, and perhaps part of the highland Rim, 66 million years ago. Approximately 24 million years later, ancestral streams of the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, and Cumberland Rivers formed. The Central Basin of Middle Tennessee began taking shape. Modern types of plants and animals, such as whales and turtles, abounded.

“The hills sit here like old dethroned kings, met for consultation: They would be very garrulous, surely, but the exquisite peace of the pastoral scene below them has stilled their life; they have forgotten the ancient anarchy which brought them forth; they dream and dream away, without discussion or endeavor.”

Sidney Lanier, 1864

Although glaciers did not cover Tennessee, four advances between 1.6 million and 10,000 B.C. gave rise to the Ice Age. Cold alternated with tropical climates. Melting ice flooded lower valleys. Mastodons, saber-toothed cats, great ground sloths, camels, and jaguars roamed dry land.

“I sing of the mountains that sing in me the cadences of plaintive earth and only give your back the land that framed the valley of my birth....

I sing of the mountains that sing in me Soft harmonies I’ve known from birth. I only give you back the land again And the plain magnificence of earth.”

*Phyllis Natalie Tickle & Margaret Bartlum Ingraham  
Writing as Natalie Bartlum, 1982*

Around 12,000 B.C., the first hunters, seeking a warmer climate during Ice Age, followed large mammals into the state. Vegetation shifted from conifers to modern deciduous forests.

***10,000 B.C. +***

Around 12,000 B.C., the first hunters, seeking a warmer climate during the Ice Age, followed large mammals into the state. Vegetation shifted from conifers to modern deciduous forests.

Humans, at first migrating in search of food, gradually adapted to their surroundings and developed settled, complex societies.

Archaic-period Indians began settling along rivers and subsisting on game and wild plants around 8000 B.C.

*"The world was in its prime, and time rolled on with accustomed regularity. The tiny streams among the hills and mountains shouted with*

*joy, and the broad rivers wound their wonted course along the peaceful valleys. Many a tall oak had grown from the acorn, spread its rich foliage to the summer winds, decayed with age, and mingled with its mother earth."*

Choctaw tradition, recorded by Charles Lanman, 1856

Cultivation of edible plants began 3000-900 B.C.

The Woodland Indian culture, characterized by settled communities, pottery production, and burial mounds, existed about 1000 B.C.-A.D. 900.

By A.D. 1250, prehistoric habitation peaked during the Mississippian era with a complex society, large towns, far-ranging trade routes, elaborate pottery and personal items, and ceremonial mounds.

*"A considerable portion of the city of Nashville has been built over an extensive Indian graveyard which lay along the valley of Lick Branch.... All around the sulphur spring [here], traces of the aborigines are manifest...."*

Joseph Jones, M.D., 1876

The Mississippian culture disappeared in Middle Tennessee about 1450, but remained alive in East Tennessee until the early 1600s.

Contact between Native Americans and Europeans began in 1540-1541 with Hernando de Soto's search for gold and silver that extended into East Tennessee and to the Mississippi River. Juan Pardo led a similar expedition, 1566-1567.

*"Still majestic in decay stand the great temple mounds. The temples that once crowned their heights, like the hands that built them, have long since crumbled to dust. And their contours, blurred by the centuries' winds and rains, erode a little more each day."*<sup>91</sup>

Thomas M. N. Lewis & Madeline Kneberg, 1958

In 1584, England's Queen Elizabeth granted Sir Walter Raleigh a patent to lands including the future Tennessee.

### ***1600 a.d.***

Three major Native-American nations were living in future Tennessee when early French and English explorers and their African slaves arrived. Both cooperation and struggle were commonplace among these diverse peoples.

From the 1500s, diseases to which Native Americans had no natural immunity were brought from Europe by explorers and settlers, resulting in depopulation. In 1738-1739, nearly half of the Cherokee died from smallpox.

On July 15, 1673, James Needham and Gabriel Arthur, first English-speaking men to cross the Appalachian Mountains into the future Tennessee, arrived at the Overhill Cherokee village of Chota.

"They were, however, as much frightened as ourselves, and what we took for a signal of war was an invitation to come near that they might give us food."

*Father Marquette, camped on  
the Chickasaw Bluffs, 1673*

Fort Prud'homme was built in 1682 by French explorer Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, on the first Chickasaw Bluff, near the mouth of the Hatchie River.

*"When civilization first peeped over the Alleghenies and looked down on the gorgeous landscape below, I think she shouted back to the advancing hosts,  
'Lo, this is Paradise regained"*

Governor Robert Love Taylor, 1897

In the early 1700s, the Cherokee forced the Creek and Yuchi from East Tennessee and with the Chickasaw drove the Shawnee out of Middle Tennessee.

In 1710, Frenchman Charles Charleville established a trading post called French Lick, the future Nashville.

Dr. Thomas Walker explored and named the Cumberland Gap mountain passage in 1750.

In 1748, Overhill Cherokee supplied most of the 160,000 animal pelts exported to Europe from South Carolina.

Beginning in 1754, England and France struggled over American lands, including Tennessee, in the French and Indian War.

In 1757, the British completed Fort Loudoun in East Tennessee to maintain Cherokee loyalty in the French and Indian War.

In 1760, the Cherokee seized Fort Loudoun and killed nearly two-dozen inhabitants in equal retaliation for the execution of chiefs by the British. In return the next year, the British destroyed 15 Cherokee towns and burned 1,500 acres of crops, resulting in hundreds of Cherokee deaths over time.

In 1760, Daniel Boone explored much of East Tennessee, traversing the valleys of the Holston and Watauga Rivers.

The English and the Cherokee made peace in 1761,

People called long hunters, because they entered the wilderness to hunt, trap, and trade for months or years, began to pave the way for permanent settlements. Elisha Walden, for whom Walden's Ridge is named, set out in 1761 from Virginia with a group of long hunters to explore East Tennessee and the Cumberland Valley.

The French and Indian War ended in 1763, with France surrendering all claims to lands east of the Mississippi River. England established the Proclamation Line forbidding pioneer settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains.

## ***1766***

"The Great Being above is very good, and provides for everybody. It is he that made fire, bread, and the rivers to run. He gave us this land, but the white people seem to want to drive us from it."

Cherokee Chief Attakullalulla,  
"The Little Carpenter," 1769

The wilderness gave way as pioneer settlements spread slowly westward. Efforts at self-government foreshadowed the American revolution, and the stage was set for dire struggles over land.

The Treaty of Hard Labour, signed by the Cherokee and the British in 1768 to prevent pioneer settlement in Tennessee, failed to stop an inrush of Virginians and Carolinians toward Cherokee land.

William Bean, believed to be the first permanent European settler in Tennessee, built a cabin in 1769 on Boone's Creek, near its junction with the Watauga River.

French-Canadian fur trader Jacques-Timothe' Demonbreun visited the Nashville area as early as 1769 and settled here in 1790.



*".. . some stopped in the mountains. A horse died, a cart broke down, a young couple could not leave the grave of their only child; fatigue, illness, the lure of the mountains—now it was one thing and another; but when the host had passed, there were scattered dwellings being reared among the great hills, and a few hundreds—progenitors of many thousands—had begun a course of life which was to continue unchanged for generations."*

**Bishop Burelson, quoted in 1927**

Pioneer settlements were established in East Tennessee during the early 1770s on Cherokee lands leased near the Watauga River, north of the Nolichucky River. The settlements of Carter's Valley and North of the Holston River were also established during this period.

In 1771, after John Donelson's survey, the Wataugans were advised that they were in North Carolina, not Virginia, and were illegally residing on Indian land.

In the early 1770s, parties of long hunters led by James Smith and Isaac Bledsoe extensively explored Middle Tennessee. Long hunter Kasper Mansker visited the Cumberland settlements in 1770, and in 1780, he built the fort named for him in present-day Goodlettsville.

*"Now's the time to keep the country. If we give up now it will ever be the same “.*

Daniel Boone's advice to the Wataugan community, about 1772-73

In 1772, the Watauga Association document was created, bringing the first written form of government in present-day Tennessee.

*“... a Set of People in the back part of this Colony bordering on the Cherokee Country .. . have appointed Magistrates and framed laws . . . and .. . erected themselves into . .. a Separate State .. . [which] Sets a*

*dangerous example to the people of America of forming Governments  
Distinct from and independent of His Majesty's Authority."*

Lord Dunmore, Royal Governor of  
Virginia, May 1774

At Sycamore Shoals in 1775, Richard Henderson negotiated the Transylvania Purchase of more than 20 million acres in future Tennessee and Kentucky from some, but not all, of the Cherokee leaders. Much of this land was also claimed by Chickasaw, Shawnee, and other tribes.

*"You have bought a fair land, but you will find its settlement dark  
and bloody"*

Dragging Canoe, leader of the Chickamauga,  
Sycamore Shoals, 1775

Sinking Creek Baptist Church, the state's oldest church still in existence, was organized 1774-1775 between Johnson City and Elizabethton.

## **1776**

Daniel Boone oversaw 30 axmen clearing Boone's Trace, and led settlers through northeast Tennessee and the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky in 1775.

Against the backdrop of the American Revolution, settlement was begun in Middle Tennessee and continued in East Tennessee, often in a hostile atmosphere of attacks and reprisals by both pioneers and Indians.

As British allies, Cherokee attacked East Tennessee settlements in 1776; soldiers responded by attacking Cherokee towns.

In 1779, James Robertson's overland party arrived from East Tennessee at French Lick (near here). They were joined the next year by John Donelson's

party, arriving by boat after navigating the Holston, Tennessee, Ohio, and Cumberland Rivers.

In 1776, Nanye'hi (Nancy Ward), "Beloved Woman" of the Cherokee, exercised her responsibility as a defender of peace by warning settlers of impending Cherokee attack. The Cherokee nation split and its war-seekers became the Chickamauga band near Chattanooga.

Jonesborough, the first pioneer town in Tennessee, established in 1779.

African Americans were with the earliest explorers and settlers of Tennessee. By the time of the census of 1790, they numbered about ten percent of the population.

"Monday, April 24th

This day we arrived at our journey's end at the Big Salt Lick, where we had the pleasure of finding Capt. Robertson and his company. It is a source of satisfaction to us to be enabled to restore to him and others their families and friends, who were entrusted to our care, and who sometime since, perhaps despaired of ever meeting again. Though our prospects are dreary, we have found a few log cabins which have been built on a cedar bluff above the lick by Capt. Robertson and his company."

*John Donelson's diary, 1780*

In 1780, at the Revolutionary War Battle of Kings Mountain in South Carolina, Tennesseans helped defeat the British under the command of Patrick Ferguson.

*"Twas on a pleasant mountain  
The Tory heathens lay,  
With a doughty major at their head,*

**One** Ferguson, they say.  
Cornwallis had detach'd him  
A-thieving for to go,  
And catch the Carolina men,  
**Or** bring the rebels low."

"The Battle of King's Mountain," Anonymous

The Reverend Samuel Doak introduced formal education in the future state with the founding of Martin Academy in 1780 near Jones borough.

"Every one must decide for themselves ... my mind is made up; I have never thought of leaving. When we came, the whole country was in possession only of the buffalo, bear, deer, and all wild animals; there were no Indians living within hundreds of miles of our settlements.... Here is the extensive country; we shall find no better."

James Robertson, 1780, as recorded by John Haywood

*'Truth is, if we had no land, -we should  
have fewer enemies.'*      *Old Tassel, Cherokee leader, 1782*

The separate State of Franklin, with John Sevier as governor, was formed in 1784 around Greeneville by future Tennesseans dissatisfied with North Carolina's lack of protection.

Captain James White settled in 1786 on the site of the future Knoxville.

**1786**

Mero District established by North Carolina in central part of the future state in November 1788.

"Avery's Trace," also known as the North Carolina Road, from Campbell's Station west of Knoxville to the Cumberland settlements, facilitated east-west travel by 1788.

First iron works established in Hawkins County on the Holston River about 1789-1790. James Robertson's Cumberland Furnace iron works established in Dickson County about 1793.

After four years of occasional armed struggle, the State of Franklin ceased to exist in 1788.

Frontier settlements became more permanent, despite Cherokee resistance which lasted until 1795. In a momentous decade, North Carolina citizenship gave way to territorial status in preparation for Tennessee statehood under the new nation.

North Carolina ceded its western lands to the national government in 1789, and present-day Tennessee existed as the Southwest Territory from 1790 to 1796. William Blount was appointed territorial governor.

Rocky Mount became the first territorial capital in 1790 when Governor Blount established temporary residence at the home of William Cobb.

*"Be it enacted by the Senate and the house of Representatives of the United States of*

*America, in congress assembled, that the territory of the United States, south of the river Ohio, for the purposes of temporary government, shall be one district; the inhabitants of which shall enjoy all the privileges, benefits, and advantages. . . ."*

Congressional act creating the Southwest Territory, 1790

Tennessee's first newspaper, *The Knoxville Gazette*, published in 1791 at Rogersville.

In 1791, John Hague built the third cotton textile mill in Use U.S. near Nashville. It was abandoned after Indian raids in 1793.

Knoxville, laid out in 1791 by Charles McClung, became, the territorial capital when Governor Blount moved there in 1792.

At age 25, Andrew Jackson received his first military appointment, judge advocate for the Davidson County militia.

General Daniel Smith made first map of Tennessee in 1794.

Warfare between the Cherokee and settlers intensified during 1792-1794.

In 1794, Blount College, forerunner of the University of Tennessee, Chartered at Knoxville.

In the 1790s, land speculators purchased hundreds of thousands of acres in East and Middle Tennessee.

In 1794, an elected Territorial Assembly held its first session.

Greeneville (later Tusculum) College chartered in 1794.

In 1795, a census revealed that the territory exceeded the required 60,000 population to petition Congress for Tennessee statehood.

Defeat of Chickamaugas, Creeks, and Shawnees diminished Indian warfare by 1794.

## ***1796***

Statehood on June 1, 1796, gave Tennesseans their own government and renewed confidence in their destiny. The Cherokee and Chickasaw still claimed three-fourths of the state's territory, but this changed dramatically within one generation, as new treaties and new roads brought more and more people into East and Middle Tennessee.

In 1796, Tennessee's first General Assembly met in Knoxville, adopted a constitution, selected John Sevier governor, William Blount and William Cocke U.S. Senators, and Andrew Jackson U.S. Representative.

Wilderness Road completed in 1796.

*"I have the pleasure of announcing to you, gentlemen, the admission of the State of Tennessee into the Federal Union, a circumstance pregnant with every flattering prospect of peace, happiness and opulence to our infant State. The period **is** at length arrived when the people of the South Western Territory may enjoy all the blessings and liberties of a free and Independent republic."*

*John Sevier, Tennessee's first governor, 1796*  
*The Knoxville Gazette* favored abolition of slavery in 1797.

**In** 1797, first fair in the state held at Greeneville.

Spanish garrison San Fernando de Barrancas, built in 1795 on the Lower Chickasaw/ Bluff at present-day Memphis, dismantled in 1797.

The state's first camp meeting was held in Sumner County in 1799; religious revivalism swept the state in 1800.

1800 Population: 105,602.

In 1801, with permission of the Chickasaw and Choctaw, federal troops widened the Natchez Trace.

Walton Road, the state's first toll road, connecting Kingston and Nashville and operated by the Cumberland Turnpike Company, was completed in 1802.

Treaties negotiated 1798-1807 with the Cherokee and Chickasaw ceded south-central and Cumberland Plateau lands for pioneer settlement.

Eighty percent of population farmed the land and raised livestock.

*"Whether it proceeds from the goodness of the water, the purity of the air, the temperature of the climate or whatever else may have been the cause, the inhabitants of that country have certainly been remarkably healthy ever since they settled on the water of [the] Cumberland river."*

Gilbert Imlay, 1797

**1806**



A settled atmosphere encouraged an increasing pace of immigration, and farming was the occupation of choice.

Andrew Jackson gained national prominence in the War of 1812.

In West Tennessee, the earth asserted its restlessness with powerful quakes.

Bank of Nashville, first in the state, chartered in 1807.

To fulfill the letter but not the spirit of a treaty, the General Assembly designated Kingston the state capital for one day in 1807 to obtain land from the Cherokee.

Commonly grown crops included corn, wheat, rye, oats, and barley, with tobacco and cotton raised for market.

In 1809, Meriwether Lewis, who had explored the Northwest with William Clark, died on the Natchez Trace near present-day Hohenwald.

1810 Population: 261,727

*. . . the roads were congested with movers during the summer months--- great top-heavy Conestoga wagons drawn by oxen.....befrilled gentlemen astride blooded horses, rawboned farmers on hairy plow-nags, peddlers and merchants with their trains of meager donkees, immigrants too poor to afford meager belongings and children on their backs-all moving west toward the promised land in Tennessee."*

Anonymous, early 19<sup>th</sup> century

Earthquakes along the still-active New Madrid seismic zone formed Reelfoot Lake in 1811-1812.

*"At daylight we had counted 27 shocks....*

*The [Mississippi] river was covered with foam and drift timber, and had risen considerably.... there was another violent shock.... The trees on both sides of the river were most violently agitated and the banks in several places fell in within our view, carrying with them innumerable trees, the rush of which falling in the river, mixed with the terrible sound attending the shock and the screaming of the geese and other wildfowl, produced an idea that all nature was in a state of dissolution...."*

John Bradbury, 1811

Bank of the State of Tennessee established in 1811 at Knoxville with branches in four cities.

First public library in state opened at Nashville in 1813.

In Roane County during 1814, coal was mined for the first time in Tennessee.

Following the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814, where Andrew Jackson defeated the Creeks with critical aid from the Cherokee, he was proclaimed a national hero. This War of 1812 battle in Alabama was one of the largest between Native Americans and the United States Army. Here Tennesseans first received national recognition for their volunteer spirit.

Tennessee Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves organized in Jefferson County in 1814.

*" Slavery is ... a volcano in disguise, and dangerous to the safety and happiness of any government on earth when it is tolerated."*

Thomas Roan to the  
Tennessee Manumission Society, 1820

Tennessee "Volunteers" showed marked valor as Andrew Jackson defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815.

Andrew Jackson appointed a **U.S.** Commissioner in 1816 to negotiate Cherokee and Chickasaw land cessions.

## ***1816***

A major treaty with the Chickasaw in 1818 opened West Tennessee to restless settlers, and land speculators took advantage of inherent opportunities. Local governments and other cultural institutions developed in burgeoning towns, as steamboats connected Tennessee to far-flung markets.

John Overton, with Andrew Jackson and James Winchester, platted Memphis on land they owned.

The Jackson Purchase of 1818 from the Chickasaw encouraged settler migration into West Tennessee. The Chickasaw expected by treaty to continue residence, but were removed in the 1830s.

**In** 1817 or 1818, Ralph E.W. Earl's collection of relics was on display at his Nashville museum. Earl's artifacts were eventually incorporated into collections of the Tennessee Historical Society and later the Tennessee State Museum.

In 1819, the *General Jackson* was the first steamboat to arrive at Nashville, and it departed with a cargo of tobacco.

**In** 1819, *The Manumission Intelligencer*, first anti-slavery paper in the United States, published at Jonesborough.

Maryville College founded in 1819.

*"Buried, as it were, in the wilderness, beyond the outskirts of busy civilized life, we lived in Quaker simplicity. The schoolmaster and the preacher had not yet arrived.... Peer of the noblest of the land, we were a law unto ourselves, drawing philosophy from the shades of the wild woods and the profusion of wild/lowers that decked the bosom of mother earth...."*

Joseph S. Williams, 1873,  
describing his family's homestead  
in the Hatchie country, about 1820

Tennessee Antiquarian Society, a progenitor of the Tennessee Historical Society, founded in 1820 with John Haywood as president.

By the 1820s, the Cherokee existed only in the state's southeastern corner and in northern Georgia.

1820 Population: 422,823.

*"I did believe, and ever will believe, that just laws can make no distinction a/privilege between the rich and poor, and that when men of high standing attempt to trample upon the rights of the weak, they are the fittest objects for example and punishment. In general, the great can protect them-selves, but the poor and humble require the arm and shield of the law."*

Andrew Jackson  
Governor of Florida, 1821

Sequoyah completed his syllabary, a written language, for the Cherokee Nation in 1821. The Cherokee moved very rapidly to literacy, thereby giving then" nation the power of "the talking leaves."

In 1823, Jackson Male Academy (later absorbed by schools that became Union University) founded at Jackson.

*The Pioneer*, first newspaper in West Tennessee, published at Jackson in 1823.

Public schools were first established by law in 1823, but were inadequately funded until the direct taxation school support legislation in 1854.  
*The Civil War* interrupted this growth.

Music publishing began at Nashville in 1824.

Nashoba, Utopian colony for freed slaves, established by Frances Wright in 1825 near Memphis.

## **1826**

David Crockett elected in 1827 to U.S. Congress.

*"I leave this rule for others when I am dead,  
**Be** always sure you're right—then go ahead."  
David Crockett, 1834*

With Tennessee's transition from frontier's edge to national prominence, its homegrown heroes—Jackson, Crockett, Houston, and Polk—moved into

important positions of state and national leadership. Andrew Jackson's two presidential elections reflected a "rise of the common man."

Sam Houston, who as a young man lived among the Cherokee, was elected governor in 1827.

First Memphis newspaper, *Memphis Advocate*, appeared January 18, 1827.

The *Atlas* reached Knoxville in 1828, becoming the first steamboat to navigate the entire Tennessee River.

Andrew Jackson elected U.S. President in 1828.

*President [Andrew Jackson] is of the opinion that the only mode left for the Indians to escape the effects of such enactments [by the states], and consequences more destructive ... is, for them to emigrate. ... He is sincerely anxious ... to save these people...."*

John Eaton,  
Secretary of War, 1829

*"I am told that the Government of the United States will spoil their treaties with us and sink our National council under their feet. It may be so, but it shall not be with our consent, or by the misconduct of our people.... if they act the tyrant and kill us for our lands, we shall, in a state of unoffending innocence, sleep with thousands of our departed people."*

Cherokee Chief Womankiller, 1829

In 1830, Medical Society of Tennessee established.

1830 Population: 681,904.

Gold discovered in 1831 at Coker Creek.

State penitentiary opened in 1831.

First railroad company, Franklin Railroad, chartered in 1831.

In 1832, Andrew Jackson re-elected President.

Asiatic cholera epidemic swept the state in 1833.

Oldest still-standing courthouse built in 1833 at Charlotte in Dickson County.

A new constitution in 1834 provided for fairer taxation and more opportunities for representation, but continued to deny suffrage for women and took away free African-American male voting rights.

*" . . . knowledge, learning, and virtue, being essential to the preservation of republican institutions . . . it shall be the duty of the General Assembly in all future periods to cherish literature and science."*

Tennessee Constitutions of 1834 & 1870

Signed by about 300, but later disavowed by the great majority of the Cherokee, the Treaty of New Echota in 1835 provided for their removal to the Trans-Mississippi West.

In 1835, the Cherokee owned prosperous farms, thousands of livestock, many sawmills, blacksmith shops, and cotton gins. They also had numerous slaves.

James K. Polk from Columbia elected Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1835.

## ***1836***

David Crockett killed at the Alamo in 1836.

Sam Houston led Texas in 1836 to independence from Mexico and became president of the new Republic of Texas.

*"Here is the secret. Full license to our oppressors, and every avenue of justice closed to us. Yes, this is the bitter cup prepared/or us by a republican and religious government—we shall drink it to the very dregs."*

Elias Boudinot in the tribal newspaper,  
*Cherokee Phoenix*, 1830

Tennessee became a leading agricultural state, Nashville was selected as the permanent capital, and the establishment of new schools and colleges reflected a growing refinement. Thousands of Cherokee were forcibly removed from their ancestral Lands east of the Mississippi River to Oklahoma territory.



In 1836, President Andrew Jackson declared the Treaty of New Echota binding, thereby mandating Cherokee emigrate by 1838 or be removed.

Uniform system of public schools established in 1837

Formerly named Ross's Landing for Cherokee Chief John Ross, Chattanooga was established in 1838.

*'When a people has their head in the Lions mouth, prudence requires them to take it out with great care. We are all laboring in great suspense to hear our final doom.'*

Cherokee Chief John Ross  
before removal, 1838

In 1838, over 4,000 of the more than 17,000 removed Cherokee died on the Trail of Tears.

With Indian claims effectively ended, the current Tennessee boundaries were resolved.

1840 Population: 829,210

Tennessee became one of the three largest tobacco-producing states. Wessington in Robertson County was the largest U.S. tobacco plantation.

With a varied farm economy, Tennessee was the nation's largest corn producer in 1840.

Cumberland University founded in 1842 at Lebanon.

First train exhibition run made in 1842 on the LaGrange and Memphis Railroad.

Bethel College established in 1842 at McKenzie.

After intervals in Knoxville, Murfreesboro, and Kingston, Nashville became the permanent state capital in 1843.

In 1844, James K. Polk was elected U.S. President. During his term of office, territorial gains from the Mexican War extended the western border of the United States to the Pacific Ocean.

Supervised by architect William Strickland, construction of the state capitol began in 1845.

Lambuth College founded at Jackson in 1843 as Memphis Conference Female Institute.

## **1846**

Humanitarian concerns for the welfare of mentally ill persons, criminals, and school children emerged in the 1840s.

“I represent the existence of troubles no imagination can exaggerate, and I have come to Tennessee as the advocate and friend of those who can not plead their own cause, and for those who have no friend to protect them....

Tennessee has been called ‘the Mother of States’ Shall she not, by the promulgation of wise laws, the liberal encouragement of schools of learning, and the substantial support of beneficent institutions, offer an example for the young States she has so largely and widely colonized?”

Dorothea L. Dix to the General Assembly  
For a new hospital for the “insane,” 1847

State’s first wire transmission company chartered in 1847. the New Orleans and Ohio Telegraph Company.

In 1848, “Volunteer” nickname became popular as a result of the more than 30,000 men who responded to a Mexican War troop call for 2,800.

Copper discovered in 1849 in Ducktown Basin in the southeastern corner of the state.

James K. Polk, 11<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, died in Nashville in 1849.

The Nashville Convention of 1850 discussed secession of the Southern states, foreshadowing divisions that would violently erupt with the onset of the Civil War.

Women on antebellum farms and plantations were responsible for the religious, educational, medical, food, and clothing needs of both slaves and free people.

In 1850, Fayette, Haywood, Madison, Shelby, and Hardeman counties produced 120,811 bales of cotton, approximately 70% of the state's crop.

Memphis was the fastest growing town in the nation in the 1850s.

State population in 1850: 1,002,717.

The Adelphi Theatre, with the second largest stage in the country, opened in 1850 in Nashville.

Nashville physicians established a medical college in 1850 at the university of Nashville.

Tennessee gained increasing prosperity and an expanding sphere of agricultural and manufacturing influences, as well as more sophisticated cultural pursuits.

Jenny Lind, "the Swedish Nightingale." Performed in Nashville and Memphis in 1851. State Library established in 1853.

The first General Assembly to meet in the new Capitol was convened by Governor Andrew Johnson in 1853.

First tax for public education was instituted in 1854.

Reflecting the economic dominance of farming, county agriculture societies were organized in 1854.

By the 1850s Nashville was an established publishing and printing center.

The Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad began in 1854.

The first biennial State Fair, forerunner of the present annual State Fair, held in Nashville in 1855.

With virtually no operational tracks in 1849, by 1860 Tennessee had 1,253 miles of working railroad.

## ***1856***

Mining one of the world's most important zinc deposit began in Jefferson County in 1856.

Connecting the two cities, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad began operation in 1859.

Tennessee, previously home of a peaceful emancipation movement, grew increasingly divided over the issues of slavery and states' rights. The Civil War years were filled with deprivation, difficulty, distrust, disease, and death.

From 1810 to 1860, the number of slaves in Tennessee increased from 44,734 to 275,719, and the number of free blacks grew from 1,318 to 7,300

Less than 5% of the state's white population were slave holders in 1860. Most of these owned 1 or 2 slaves, alongside whom they worked.

State Population in 1860: 1,109,801

Governor Isham Harris issued a proclamation dissolving all connection with the Federal Union on June 24, 1861, and Tennessee, the last state to join the Confederacy, entered the Civil War which began on April 12.

Memphis' LeMoyne Institute originated in 1862.

Knoxville and Greeneville hosted conventions in 1861 to discuss East Tennessee's possible re-entry to the Union.

"Tennessee will not furnish a single man for the purposes of coercion, but 50,000 if necessary, for the defense of our southern brethren."

Gov. Isham G. Harris

Responding to Lincoln's call for troops to suppress  
The Confederacy, April 1861

In February, 1862, Fort Henry and Donnelson fell to Federal troops under General Ulysses Grant, opening Nashville and most of Tennessee to Union occupation.

Federal troops occupied Nashville on February 24, 1862, and made it union headquarters, supply depot, and hospital center.

In 1862, Union soldiers brought baseball to Nashville, and they played here in the area of the Mall.

"Hospital Duties"

Fold away all your bright – tinted dresses,  
Turn the key on your jewels today,  
And the wealth of your tendrils – like tresses  
Braid back in a serious way;  
No more delicate gloves, no more laces,  
No more trifling in boudoir or bower,  
But come with your souls in your faces

To meet the stern wants of the hour....

Anonymous

The battle of Shiloh, which took place April 6 – 7, 1862, had 25,000 casualties.

“Gentle winds of springtime seem a sighing over a thousand new-made graves.”

A Northern soldier writing about Shiloh

NORTH  
UNION

SOUTH  
CONFEDERATE

“The Civil War is our only ‘felt’ history – history lived in the national imagination. This is not to say that the War is always, and by all men, felt in the same way. Quite the contrary. But this fact in an index to the very complexity, depth, and fundamental significance to the event.... The Civil War..... was, after all, a civil war.... The prototype of all war, for in the persons of fellow citizens who happen to be the enemy we meet again, with the old ambivalence of love and hate and with all the old guilts, the blood brothers of our childhood.”

Robert Penn Warren, 1961

Memphis surrendered to Union forces June 6, 1862.

“ I have seen so much of prejudice, and its dirty work, that I have absolutely come to the conclusion that it is wicked in the first degree; that it is a wicked outrage upon the human family.”

Battle of Stones River December 31, 1862 and January 2, 1863. One in four who fought were casualties.

Then the earth throbs with the roll of drums and the measured tread of martial hosts.

Mary Noailles Murfree in the Stones River battlefield, 1884

Bloody checkmate at the battle of Chickamauga on September 19 – 20 1863

“....the dead were piled upon each other....like cord wood.”

Chickamauga veteran

Battle of Knoxville, November, 1863.

Battles of Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain, and Missionary Ridge, on November 23 – 25, 1863, secured the Union stronghold in Tennessee.

“Our animals were starving, and the men had starvation before them.”

Northern soldier at Chattanooga

With the re-election of President Lincoln in 1864, Tennessee’s governor Andrew Johnson, was elected Vice-President on November 4.

Battle of Franklin, November 30, 1864.

“Boys, this will be short but desperate.”

Confederate General Otto Strahl to his men as they prepared to charge the open field. Strahl was one of five Confederate generals killed that day among 6,000 Confederate casualties.

Battle of Nashville, December 15 – 16, 1864, ended the last desperate Confederate attempt to regain Tennessee.

“The blood of white and black men has flowed freely together...”

Union General George Thomas, after the Battle of Nashville in which the US Army included a significant number of African-American soldiers.

Lincoln assassinated!

Andrew Johnson assumed the Presidency the next day, April 15, 1865.

“You have been good soldiers; you can be good citizens. Obey the laws, preserve your honor, and the government....will be magnanimous.

Confederate General N.B. Forrest to his troops upon their surrender, May, 1865

Slaves freed by Tennessee constitutional amendment in 1865.

The Army of Tennessee, the last major Confederate force, surrendered on April 26, 1865, as the Civil War ended.

Klu Klux Klan formed in Pulaski on December 24, 1865.

## ***1866***

Furl that banner! For ‘tis weary,  
Round its staff ‘tis drooping dreary;

Furl it, fold it, it is best:  
For there’s not a man to wave it,  
And there’s not a sword to save it,  
And there’s not one left to lave it  
In the blood which heroes gave it,  
And its foes now scorn and brave it,

Furl it, hide it, let it rest.  
Chorus of “The Conquered Banner”  
Father Abram J. Ryan, 1865

Fisk University opened on January 9, 1866.

On July 24, 1866 Tennessee was the first state to be restored to the Union after ratifying the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment which extended citizenship to black freedmen.

“Do not expect us to do all, nor half, but put your shoulders to the wheel and do it for yourselves.”

Clinton B. Fisk  
Freedman’s Bureau, 1866

Federal Army departed Tennessee in 1866.

Separate Negro schools established in 1867 at state expense.

Due in part to pressure applied by the National and State Colored Men’s Conventions, Tennessee’s Brownlow administration granted suffrage for black men in 1867- two years before Congress did.

Ex-Confederates regained the vote in 1869.

State Population in 1870: 1,258,520.

The original Ku Klux Klan was effectively disbanded in March, 1869.

Third State Constitution adopted in 1870.

The Constitutional Convention forged a document that aided unifying sentiments by abolishing slavery and preserving the rights of African-Americans to vote. A tax in voting, however, prohibited many whites and African-Americans from casting ballots.

Tennessee began to recover slowly from the Civil War that had interrupted its arc of material and social progress. During the Reconstruction era African-Americans made overt political gains which would be eroded by the turn of the century.

The first African-American elected official in the state was Randall Brown, a Davidson County Commissioner in 1870.

Vanderbilt University established in 1873.

In 1872, Sampson Keeble of Nashville was the first of 13 African-American legislators elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Fisk Jubilee Singers toured Europe in 1873 to raise money for the purchase of a new and larger campus and to build Jubilee Hall.

First State Board of Education established in 1875.

In 1873, approximately 2,000 people died in Memphis during a Yellow Fever epidemic.

Knoxville College opened in 1875.



In 1873, eleven blast furnaces on the Western Highland Rim produced iron at the rate of about 50,000 tons per year. To operate indefinitely, these furnaces would have required 375 square miles of timber for fuel.

## **1876**

Aided by infusion of northern capital, Tennesseans worked hard to recapture economic and cultural momentum lost during the war. African Americans continued gaining ground in the postwar period. Yellow fever epidemics pointed to the need for stronger civic concerns such as city sewers and sanitation engineering.

The first independent Republican African-American 'gubernatorial candidate, William F. Yardley of Knoxville, captured 1% of the statewide vote in 1876.

**By** the 1870s, the Jewish population supported synagogues in Brownsville, Memphis, Nashville, and Chattanooga.

*"When you are an old man, I want you to remember that your old teacher said, ' Don't ever be a spectator; take a hand in the game!'"*

William R. "Sawney" Webb,  
founder of Webb School, Bell Buckle

Meharry Medical College for Negroes founded in 1876.

State Board of Health created in 1877.

In 1878, the yellow fever epidemic in Memphis so decimated the population that the legislature revoked the city charter and directly oversaw the metropolis for 14 years.

*"... there was much agitation over the question of [yellow fever] quarantine. In addition to being bankrupt, Memphis had suffered through the civil war, reconstruction, two yellow fever epidemics, one of cholera and one of smallpox in the years immediately preceding... the day the epidemic was declared it was hardly necessary to urge the people to leave the city.... The population was reduced to less than 20,000."*

Memphis Board of Health, 1878

In 1878, the Nashville Medical College became the Medical Department of the University of Tennessee. It moved to Memphis in 1911 and became, as the University of Tennessee at Memphis, one of the foremost, comprehensive medical centers in the nation.

In 1879, East Tennessee University (formerly Blount College) became the University of Tennessee.

1880 Population: 1,542,359

Residential and commercial electric lighting proliferated in cities in the 1880s.

Iroquois, bred at Nashville's Belle Meade Plantation, in 1881 was the first American horse to win the English Derby.

A state branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was founded in 1882, and soon exceeded all others in zeal to prohibit the drinking of liquor.

In 1882, Julia Doak became the first woman appointed United States Superintendent of Education.

Lane College founded at Jackson in 1882.

In 1883, William H. Franklin founded Swift Memorial College in Rogersville for the education of African Americans.

In 1885 at Knoxville, feminist rights advocate Lizzie Crozier French founded the Ossoli Circle, Tennessee's first women's club.

The new voices of labor and women, reflecting a national, shift, were heard statewide, even above the din of firmly resurging cities. The three-mile-long, cantilevered, steel bridge over the Mississippi at Memphis was a fitting symbol for Tennessee's renewed outreach to the rest of America and the world.

## **1886**

Robert L. Taylor defeated his brother, Alfred A. Taylor, in the 1886 governor's race dubbed the "War of the Roses."

*"The basis of all wealth is the soil of the land. Prosperous cities, towns and huge manufactories seem to spring up and flourish as if by magic and without reference as to the agricultural advantage of the country; but such growth will be temporary unless sustained by a country possessing agricultural wealth. It may almost be reduced to a mathematical problem in which it may be said the soil and climate equal the wealth of the country."*

Goodspeed's *History of Tennessee*, "Marshall County," 1886

Grant College, founded in 1872, became Chattanooga University (later University of Tennessee at Chattanooga) in 1886.

Theodore Roosevelt visited Nashville in 1888 to research his book, *The Winning of the West*.

In 1889, Lide Merriwether founded state's first woman's suffrage organization at Memphis.

In 1889, Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Memphis were among the -first Southern cities with electric streetcars, and suburbs began to develop.

In 1890, African Americans Squire J.W. White and H.N. Willis founded the Penny Savings Bank in Chattanooga.

1890 Population: 1,767,518.

In 1889-1890, Ryman sponsored construction of the Union Gospel Tabernacle, later home of the Grand Ole Opry, 1943-1974.

The Agrarian Reform Movement, champion of the small farmer, elected its Democratic candidate governor in 1890.

David Lipscomb College (later University) founded at Nashville in 1891

First major Tennessee labor strike called in 1891-1892 by the Briceville coal miners. After farming, coal mining was the second largest occupation in the state.

The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, now among the world's largest religious publishers, chose Nashville for its headquarters in 1891 because of its reputation as a center for printing.

After Memphis African-American newspaper owner and feminist Ida B. Wells demanded justice for lynchings in 1892 editorials, a mob threatened her life and destroyed the *Free Speech* building.

"Empress of the Blues," singer Bessie Smith, born at Chattanooga in 1894.

Discoverer of 16 comets, Nashville astronomer Edward E. Barnard detected Jupiter's fifth moon in 1892.

Nashvillian Caroline Meriwether Goodlett organized the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1894.

Industry and commerce were growing, even though most Tennesseans lived outside the cities and the state's economy was centered on agriculture. The clearest measure of this growth was the tremendously successful Centennial Exposition. It featured a presentation of mechanical, commercial, and transportation advances, cultural displays, and architectural feats such as the Parthenon reproduction in Nashville's Centennial Park.

**On June 1, 1896,  
the State of Tennessee was 100 years old.**

First state woman's equal suffrage convention met in Nashville at the Centennial Exposition's Women's Building.

Nashville African American Richard Henry Boyd, established the National Baptist Publishing Board in 1896.

*"Tennessee's Centennial"  
They bid you hail, **0**, Tennessee,  
**On** this your grand Centennial time;  
They hail you strong and grand and free;  
Your greetings come from every clime.*

*Fair Nashville cradles in her hills,  
Half girdled by clear Cumberland,  
From out her rocks and singing rills  
Forth stretches her white, beck'nin hand.*

## **Annie Somers Gilchrist, 1897**

Centennial Exposition at Nashville was visited by 1,786,711 persons from May through October, 1897.

"Million Dollar Fire" on Gay Street devastated Knoxville in 1897.

Lincoln Memorial University founded at Harrogate in 1897.

In 1898, the gunboat *Nashville* fired the first shot of the Spanish American War.

In 1899, Benjamin Franklin Thomas, Joseph Brown Whitehead, and John Thomas Lupton began bottling Coca-Cola in Chattanooga and revolutionized the soft drink industry.

General Assembly passed Uniform Textbook Law in 1899.

Legendary Tennessean Casey Jones killed in railroad accident near Vaughn, Mississippi, in 1900.

1900 Population: 2,020,616.

Hall-Moody Institute (later replaced by the University of Tennessee Junior College, now University of Tennessee at Martin) founded in 1900.

Memphis was the world's largest inland hardwood lumber market in 1900.

Trevecca Nazarene College (later University) founded at Nashville in 1901.

Citizen's Savings Bank and Trust Company, the oldest continuously-operating, African-American-owned bank in the United States, opened its Nashville doors in 1904.

The National Life and Accident Insurance Company was founded in 1902 at Nashville.

*"Solitude is deep water, and small boats do not ride well in it. Only a superficial observer could fail to understand that the mountain people really love their wilderness—love it for its beauty, for its freedom. . . . The charm and mystery of by-gone days broods over the mountain country—the charm of pioneer hardihood, of primitive peace, of the fatalism of ancient peoples, of the rites and legends of the aborigines. To one who understands these high solitudes it is no marvel that the inhabitants should be mystics, dreamers, given to fancies often absurd, but often wildly sweet."*

Emma Bell Miles, 1905

In Chattanooga, African-American Mary Morrison protested Jim Crow laws in 1905 by refusing a back seat in a public streetcar and initiating a streetcar boycott. Other African Americans held similar protests in Jackson, Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville.

## **1906**

State-supported education took a giant step forward with the founding of five colleges, mainly “normal schools” for teacher education. They became state universities. Although prized distilleries and breweries had operated for

decades. Prohibition was hotly debated. In Memphis, W. C. Handy gave birth to the blues, continuing a longstanding, diverse musical heritage within Tennessee.

In Memphis around 1907, Charles H. Mason founded the Church of God in Christ, an African-American movement, which became the world's largest Pentecostal denomination.

In 1908, after an attorney for timber developers was murdered, the state militia stopped Reelfoot Lake "Night Riders," vigilantes who organized to keep the lake accessible for commercial fishing.

The Marathon, first automobile totally manufactured in the South and marketed nationally, was produced at Jackson, 1907-1910, then at Nashville, 1910-1914.

In 1908, orator, senator, prohibitionist, and newspaperman Edward Ward Carmack was killed in a gun battle on a Nashville street by Robin Cooper, son of Carmack's political enemy Duncan B. Cooper.

A future pharmaceutical giant, Plough Drug Company (later Schering-Plough) began at Memphis in 1908.

Statewide prohibition law passed in 1909.

1910 Population: 2,184,789.

Middle Tennessee Normal School (later Middle Tennessee State University)



opened at Murfreesboro in 1911.

In 1911, President Taft appointed Nashville African-American attorney James C. Napier Register of the U.S. Treasury.

In 1911, East Tennessee State Normal School (later East Tennessee State University) opened in Johnson City.

*"Folks I've just been down, down to Memphis Town,  
That's where the people smile, smile on you all the while,  
Hospitality, they were good to me,  
• I couldn't spend a dime And had the grandest times,  
I went out dancin with a Tennessee dear. They had a  
fellow there named Handy with a band you should hear  
and while the dancers gently swayed. All the band boys played,  
real Harmony I never will forget the tune that  
Handy called the Memphis Blues. Oh those Blues. ..."*

**"Memphis Blues"** (originally "Mr. Crump"),  
lyrics by George A. Norton, 1912

West Tennessee Normal School (later Memphis State University and University of Memphis) opened in 1912.

In 1913, one-third of Tennessee's gross revenues was appropriated for education, and school attendance was made compulsory.

Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial Normal School for Negroes at Nashville (later Tennessee State University) opened in 1912.

*"The foreground of such a landscape in summer is warm, soft, dreamy, caressing, habit-able; beyond it are gentle and luring solitudes; ... everywhere the green forest mantle bespeaks a vital present; nowhere does cold, bare granite stand as the sepulchre of an immemorial past."*

Horace Kephart, 1913

Aluminum Company of America began operation of its Alcoa plant in 1914.

In 1915, Edward H. "Boss" Crump was ousted as Memphis mayor for refusal to enforce prohibition laws, but he and his political machine greatly influenced Tennessee politics for the next 40 years.

## ***1916***

First self-service grocery store, Clarence Saunders's "Piggly Wiggly," opened at Memphis in 1916.

Tennessee Polytechnic Institute (later Tennessee Technological University) established at Cookeville in 1916.

Fisk University won the National Black Football Championship in 1916.

In 1916, Robert R. Church, Jr., Republican millionaire, organized fellow African-American voters in Shelby County.

Tennessee captured the national spotlight with World War I hero Alvin C. York and with the critical vote of the General Assembly for woman's suffrage.

Multitudes also listened every Saturday night to the "Grand Ole

Opry," the longest-running radio show in American history.

Cleveland's Lee College established in 1918.

"Moon Pies" originated at Chattanooga in 1918-1919

*"In Tennessee, the ancient mountains stand,  
Guarding the green fields to the far, far -west,  
The Mississippi folds her further strand,  
And all her hills and plains and valleys rest."*

**Walter Malone. 1919**

Operated entirely by women, First Woman's Bank opened at Clarksville in 1919.

Tennessee Eastman Corporation (later Eastman Chemical Company) began operations at Kingsport in 1920 to produce methanol for Eastman Kodak Company film.

In 1920, Tennessee's deciding vote for ratification of the 19th Amendment to U.S. Constitution gave all American women the right to vote.

Nearly 100,000 Tennesseans served in World War I.  
Over 1,800 of them died in the conflict.

*'Suffrage is only one spoke in the wheel of progress,  
but it is as necessary as any other. The shackle must be  
stricken off; women must be free as any other, for her  
own sake first, in order that she may grow as her  
natural genius, and then for the sake of the whole -world,  
where her spiritualizing influence is needed.'*

Anne Dallas Dudley, 1914

Theatre Memphis, the state's oldest, continually-operating community theatre company, staged its first production in 1921.

In 1921, the first state concrete highway connected Athens to Calhoun.

In 1921, Ann Lee Keys Worley of Sullivan County, first woman elected to the state senate, introduced a bill permitting women to hold any public office.

In 1922, 16 poets and critics, many from Vanderbilt University, began issuing their poetry magazine, *The Fugitive*. Donald Davidson, John Crowe Ransom, Alien Tate, and Robert Penn Warren went on to write essays for the Agrarian manifesto, *I'll Take My Stand*, published in 1930.

Tennessee's first radio station began broadcasting in Memphis in March 1922.

In 1922, Moses McKissack was joined in Nashville by his brother Calvin to form McKissack & McKissack. It became the nation's oldest, continually-operating, African-American-owned architectural firm.

Memphis's *Commercial Appeal* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1923 for meritorious public service.

For National Life and Accident Insurance Company, in 1925, George D. Hay inaugurated the WSM "Barn Dance" radio show that became the "Grand Ole Opry." When constructed at Brentwood in 1932, WSM's 878-foot radio tower was North America's tallest.

Science teacher John T. Scopes's emotional trial, argued in Dayton in 1925 by defense lawyer Clarence Darrow and special prosecutor William Jennings Bryan, unsuccessfully challenged the state law that prohibited teaching evolution theory in public schools.

**1926**

During the Great Depression, many migrated from rural areas to cities in search of work, bringing their beloved "hillbilly" music with them. Some found employment on the Tennessee Valley Authority dams and in other New Deal programs. In West Tennessee, "King Cotton" began a gradual decline after a century-long reign.

First state forest established in 1927 on 38 acres of Madison County.

Austin Peay Normal School (later Austin Peay State University) founded at Clarksville in 1927.

Landmark recording sessions of the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers at Bristol in 1927 profoundly shaped country music.

Four bridges erected in 1928 cross the Tennessee River.

Devastating flood waters saturated Tennessee in 1927

In 1929, the Memphis Merchants Clearing Association began to flash commodities quotation; on cottonseed and cottonseed meal throughout the world.

1930 Population: 2,616,556.

By 1930, there were 4,000 miles of railroad track in Tennessee, linking virtually every town and city in the state and providing the primary means of transportation for both goods and services. During the 1940s, some 95 percent of all military equipment and personnel moved by rail.

*"Calvin and me come from the mountains, for Calvin knowed he could make a living some way or another about town doing odd jobs. . . . So me and him pulled out and come faring down from the mountains to Knoxville, and ain't never going back again. I miss them mountains sometimes. Yes, I miss that steep old land. . . . Farm living is plain slaving from one month to the next, from morning to night. And they's*

*nothing, left to show for all the hard work you do."*

Lola Simmons, 1930s

Bryan College established at Dayton in 1930.

Popular Lookout Mountain tourist attraction Rock City Gardens—"See Rock City"- opened in 1932.

After efforts begun by Anne M. Davis in 1923, the Great Smokey Mountains National park was officially established in 1931. It embraced the oldest mountain range on the North American continent and one of the richest botanical grounds on earth.

Krystal hamburgers originated in Chattanooga in 1932.

Congress established the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1933.

*"Through this dust these hills once spoke."*

Epitaph of T. S. Stribling, Clifton, 1965,  
1933 Pulitzer Prize winner.

Construction began on modern airports for Nashville, Chattanooga, Memphis, Knoxville, and the Tri-Cities area in the mid-1930s.

Between 1933 and 1937, over 200,000 tenant farmers were evicted as a result of government payments to land owners to reduce cropland.

*"I ain't goin to sell, but I ain't goin to give you no trouble.  
I am just goin to set here in my rocking chair and let the  
waters come. up around me and drown me."*

Old Aunt Rachel, a legendary "holdout" whose

land was slated for flooding by TVA.

In 1936, socialist Kate Bradford Stockton became the first woman to run for governor in Tennessee.

## ***1936***

Enlistment of women and men, training maneuvers, and manufacturing were only a part of Tennessee's war effort, culminating with the "secret city" Construction of Oak Ridge. Originally one of three "Manhattan Project" sites, scientists and workers at this 60,000-acre fenced facility produced enriched uranium for atomic bombs used on Japan. Over the years, this National Laboratory continued developing various new technologies for peace as well as defense.

Norris, first dam in TVA's system, began producing hydroelectric power in 1936. Gradual electrification of all the rural areas of the state followed.

Memphis Academy (later College) of Art founded in 1936.

1940 Population: 2,915,841.

In 1937, Nashville sculptor William Edmondson was the first African American to have a one-man show at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

First official state park, Harrison Bay, founded in 1938 in Hamilton County.

Shelbyville inaugurated the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration in 1939.

1940 Population: 2,915,841.

Nashville's annual international Iroquois Steeplechase was first run in 1941.

Beginning in 1942, over 800,000 servicemen fought war games in 21 Middle Tennessee counties in preparation for the invasion of Europe.

*"Few men have the satisfaction of knowing they have made a contribution in their lifetime that will last through the ages and touch the lives of millions.... we labored to beautify your land and we pass it into your hands. The preservation of this country will remain strong as long as the flame of freedom is filled by creative thoughts and accomplishments and not smothered by negligence."*

Cove Lake State Park Civilian Conservation Corps marker, 1942

Vultee in Nashville, first airplane manufacturing plant in the Southeast, introduced the mechanized assembly line to the aircraft industry and pioneered in employment of women industrial workers during World War II.

315,501 Tennesseans served in the armed forces during World War II. Of these, 5,731 servicemen and servicewomen lost their lives.

In 1945, world attention focused on the "Manhattan Project" in Oak Ridge for its part in the atomic bomb construction.

315,501 Tennesseans served in the armed forces during World War II. Of these, 5,731 servicemen and servicewomen lost their lives



Cordell Hull received the 1945 Nobel Peace Prize for his role in founding the United Nations.

*"The greatest and most terrible of wars ended this week in the echoes of an enormous event.... The rational mind ... had put into the hands of common man the fire and force of the sun itself.. .. When the bomb split open the universe, and revealed the prospect of the infinitely extraordinary, it also revealed the oldest, simplest, commonest, most neglected and most important of facts: that each man is eternally and above all else responsible for his own soul...."*

1958 Pulitzer Prize winner James Agee, *TIME Magazine*, 1945

## **1946**

After the war, most Tennesseans enjoyed increased prosperity brought on by wartime production. Some African Americans, however, sought in civilian life the relative equality found in the military. Memphis innovators built a motel chain and rock 'n' roll. Country music reached new popular heights, and Tennesseans were called to war in Korea.

Ushering in the "space age," John H. DeWitt Jr. received worldwide attention when he bounced radar signals off the moon in 1946.

In 1946, attorneys Thurgood Marshall (later U.S. Supreme Court Justice) and Z. Alexander Looby successfully defended 25 African Americans in the Columbia race riot case, bringing national attention to the issue of civil rights.

Tennessee Conservation League chartered in 1946 to restore and protect state's wildlife.

*"Now my feet walk far and my feet walk fast,  
But they still got an itch for heavenly grass."*

## Tennessee Williams, 1946

Tennessee A&I (later TSU) won the first of its eleven National Black Football championships in 1946.

Southwestern at Memphis (first Clarksville's Stewart College, currently Rhodes) celebrated its centenary in 1948.

The state's first television station, WMCT in Memphis, went on air on December 13, 1948.

The shopping center Poplar Plaza, built at Memphis in 1949, foreshadowed an exodus of commerce from downtown city centers.

The Capitol Hill Redevelopment Plan of 1949 addressed land surrounding the capitol building and was one of the first large-scale urban renewal projects in the United States.

Tennessee Historical Commission began the historical highway markers program in 1950.

*"America is never going to find security  
in oppression. America is going to find  
strength only in free men who have the  
right to speak and think as they wish"*

Senator Estes Kefauver, **1950**

**1950 Population:** 3,291,718.

University of Tennessee at Knoxville won the national intercollegiate football championship in 1951 under General Robert Neyland.

Belmont College (later Belmont University) founded in 1951 at Nashville on the site of Ward-Belmont College for Women, 1913-1951.

*"Oh, I wake up in the morning in the country that I love  
With the mountains all around me and the blue sky up above,  
Where the southern wind will sing to me a tender lullaby  
In the shadow of the Smokies, underneath the southern sky."*

Composer and author, Earl Nunn, recorded  
by Roy Acuff & his Smoky Mountain Boys,  
1951

By 1951, Tennessee Valley Authority had built 20 hydroelectric dams.

Launching a worldwide motel chain, Kemmons Wilson built the first Holiday Inn at Memphis in 1952.

In the 1950s, Memphian Mary Church Terrell picketed major Washington, D.C. businesses that treated African Americans unfairly.

Rock 'n' roll recording started at Sam Phillips's Sun Studio at Memphis in 1954.

Nashville's United Methodist Publishing House celebrated its centenary in 1954.

Of the 10,500 Tennesseans who served during 1950 – 1953 in the Korean War, 843 were casualties.

Rosa Parks studied civil disobedience at the Highlander Folk School, founded at Monteagle in 1932 by Myles Horton and Don West. She energized the modern civil rights movement by initiating the grassroots Montgomery bus boycott in 1955.

## ***1956***

Charles L. Bartlett received the 1956 Pulitzer Prize in national reporting for *The Chattanooga Times*.

In the three grand divisions of the state, civil rights struggles over education, eating facilities, and voting rights mirrored the nation. Olympian Wilma Rudolph and music icon Elvis Presley captured America's attention. Tennessee city dwellers for the first time outnumbered their "country cousins."

National Guard occupied Clinton in 1956, queuing riots over admission of black high school students. A year later, Bobby Cain became the first African American to graduate from an integrated public high school in the South.

In 1956, Elvis Presley had his first #1 hits: "I Forgot to Remember to Forget" on the country chart, and a week later "Heartbreak Hotel," written by Tennessean Mae Axton, on the pop chart.

Nashville's Life & Casualty Tower, designed by Edwin Keeble and completed in 1957, was the tallest building in the Southeast.

Tom Little of the *Nashville Tennessean* received Pulitzer Prizes in 1957 and 1962 for editorial cartooning.

Athens's Tennessee Wesleyan College celebrated its centenary in 1957.

In May 1960, after numerous sit-in demonstrations, Nashville became the first major southern city with desegregated lunch counters.

Tennessee State University student Wilma Rudolph, who as a child wore leg braces for polio, won three gold medals in track at the 1960 Rome Olympics

under TSU's internationally renowned coach Ed Temple.

*"Do it, don't daydream about it. Do it. I want you to do it."*

Wilma Rudolph, 1977

1960 Population: 3,567,089.

Fayette and Haywood Counties received national attention in 1960-1961 when land owners evicted African-American tenant farmers because they sought to exercise their right to vote.

The University of the South celebrated its centenary in 1960.

Carson-Newman College at Jefferson City celebrated its centenary in 1961.

Aquinas College established at Nashville in 1961.

Nathan G. Caldwell and Gene S. Graham won 1962 Pulitzer Prizes for national reporting in the *Nashville Tennessean*.

Founded by entertainer Danny Thomas, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis opened in 1962. It became one of the world's premier research centers for treatment of catastrophic childhood diseases.

By 1963, Tennessee ranked as the 16th largest industrial state.

President John F. Kennedy spoke at Vanderbilt University to dedicate the Cordell Hull Dam in 1963.

In 1963, Nashville and Davidson County became the first in the nation to consolidate governments into a single metropolitan entity.

Ingrain Book Group, founded at Nashville in 1964, became the leading wholesaler of trade books, textbooks, and specialty magazines in America.

In 1965, the state's first three community colleges were authorized and located at Cleveland, Columbia, and Jackson.

## ***1966***

At its namesake community, Milligan College celebrated its centenary in 1966.

In 1966, **Dr.** Dorothy Brown became the first African-American woman elected to the Tennessee General Assembly.

In 1966, the Jack Daniels distillery at Lynchburg celebrated its centenary. Four years later, the George Dickel distillery at Tullahoma did the same.

New and varied service and distribution industries, and old standby s such as the music industry, carried Tennessee through the turbulence of the 1960s and the Vietnam War. Racial issues dominated news, culminating with the tragic assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis.

Bristol's King College celebrated its centenary in 1967.

President Lyndon B. Johnson discussed Vietnam policy before the General Assembly in 1967.

Tennessee Arts Commission Originated in 1967.

Hospital Corporation of America founded in 1968 at Nashville.

*"Somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly. Somewhere I read of the freedom of speech. Somewhere I read about the freedom of the press. Somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest or right!"*

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** in Memphis  
on the eve of his assassination, 1968.

Riots followed the assassination at the Lorraine Motel of civil rights leader and nonviolence proponent Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who was in Memphis in 1968 to support a strike by sanitation workers.

Freed-Hardeman University at Henderson celebrated its centenary in 1969

Arts Council of Greater Chattanooga founded in 1969.

1970 Population: 3,924,164.

Tennessee Environmental Council formed in 1970.

Stax Records, Inc., with artists Otis Redding, Rufus and Carla Thomas, Isaac Hayes, the Staple Singers, and Albert King, made the "Memphis Sound" famous worldwide.

Pulaski's Martin Methodist College celebrated its centenary in 1970.

Racial unrest in Chattanooga during 1971 was quelled by the National Guard.

Christian Brothers University at Memphis celebrated its centenary in 1971.

In 1971, Vanderbilt research biologist Earl W. Sutherland awarded Nobel Prize for his discoveries concerning hormones.

"Fan Fair" for country music enthusiasts launched by WSM and Country Music Association in 1972.

Memphian Benjamin Hooks began his 16-year term as executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1973.

Tennessee Humanities Council chartered in 1973.

Federal Express Corporation founded at Memphis in 1973.

First storytelling festival celebrated at Jonesborough in 1973 sparked a national revival and the founding there of the National Storytelling Association.

Browns Ferry, TVA's first nuclear plant, went on line in 1974; Watts Bar and Sequoyah nuclear plants followed.

Knoxville's University of Tennessee men won national track championships in 1972 and 1974.

Portions of Tennessee declared a disaster area after a 1974 tornado.



Congress authorized the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area in 1974.

In 1974, the Grand Ole Opry moved to its new home at Opryland, U.S.A.

George Peabody College for Teachers celebrated its centenary in 1975.

Floods in 1975 caused millions of dollars of damage.

More than 49,000 Tennesseans served in the Vietnam War, of whom 1,289 lost their lives.

## ***1976***

Knoxville's World's Fair and the return of the automobile manufacturing industry in Tennessee dominated the headlines alongside bank and crop failures and investigations of government corruption.

Alex Haley won the 1977 Special Pulitzer Prize for *Roots*, a book that sparked a nationwide revival in family and local history.

Robin Hood's photography for the *Chattanooga News-Free Press* won a 1977 Pulitzer Prize.

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, won the 1978 men's national swimming and diving championship.

The East Tennessee State University College of Medicine (later James H. Quillen College of Medicine) admitted its first class of students in 1978.

In 1979, Governor-elect Lamar Alexander assumed office three days early due to the suspicions raised by the U.S. Justice Department's investigation into the administration of Governor Ray Blanton.

1980 Population: 4,590,750.

After 18 years of protests from farmers, Native Americans, and environmentalists concerned about the snail darter fish, TVA completed Tellico Dam in 1980, thereby flooding Overhill Cherokee village sites such as the sacred town, Chota.

*'Nations from around the world are hosting pavilions  
and exhibits, as are well-known, international and  
domestic corporations and organizations ...  
19 nations are participating.... With energy as its  
timely theme, the 1982 World's Fair will be the place  
to see the world of tomorrow, today"*

Brochure for the Knoxville  
World's Fair, 1982

Nashville Network went on the air in 1983.

In 1983, Gaylord Broadcasting purchased Opryland, U.S.A. from American General Corporation.

Nissan Motor Manufacturing Corporation U.S.A. dedicated one of the world's most technically-advanced truck assembly plants in Rutherford County in 1983.

In 1983, United American Bank of Knoxville was declared insolvent, the fourth largest such failure in United States history.

*"I pledge to you today that we will work as hard in the days ahead as we have up until now to keep Nissan at the forefront of innovative employee relations."*

Marvin T. Runyon, 1983 President and CEO,  
Nissan Motor Manufacturing Corporation U.S.A.  
and later Postmaster General

Cheatham County native Pat Head Summit coached the United States women's basketball team to its first Olympic gold medal in 1984.

Swimmer Tracy Caulkins won three gold medals at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

For the first time since removal in 1838, Eastern & Western Cherokee Councils reunited on the sacred council grounds at Red Clay State Historic Area in 1984.

Floods, followed by drought, cost Tennessee farmers \$500 million in 1983.

In 1985, aboard the space shuttle *Discovery*, astronaut Dr. Rhea Seddon of Murfreesboro conducted medical experiments during 109 orbits of earth.

Tennesseans prepared for the bicentennial celebration with a statewide heritage festival, "Homecoming '86." As the third century of statehood began in 1996, foreign investment, new industries, medical triumphs, a thriving music industry, and a second term, native son vice-president made Tennesseans optimistic about their future.

## ***1986***

Homecoming '86" celebrated Tennessee's heritage and spawned the Southern Festival of Books.

Stanley Cohen of Vanderbilt University awarded 1986 Nobel Prize for discoveries in cell and organ growth.

In 1986, former Nashvillian Oprah Winfrey's television talk show broke records for national syndication.

1990 Population: 4,877,185.

First General Motors Saturn car rolled from a vast factory complex at Spring Hill in 1990.

At Fort Campbell, 24 units mobilized for Operation Desert Storm in the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

In 1992, Governor Ned McWherter established the Tennessee Bicentennial Commission, and with the State Building Commission provided for the construction of the Tennessee Bicentennial Capitol Mall.

Collegedale's Southern Adventist University celebrated its centenary in 1992.

In 1992 and 1996 Albert Gore Jr. elected vice-president of the United States.

“You’ve never left Tennessee, have you? You won’t have it dragged out of you, will you?”

Peter Taylor, 1994

In 1994, Cliff Shull received the Nobel Prize in physics for his work at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Michael P. Ramirez awarded 1994 Pulitzer Prize for Memphis’s Commercial Appeal editorial cartooning.

By 1994, 69 Japanese manufacturers, with more than \$4 billion invested and over 27,000 employees, were located in plants from Memphis to Greeneville.

Negotiations began in 1995 to bring a National Football League’s Houston Oilers to Nashville.

In 1995, gross revenues from Tennessee music-related companies were approximately \$3.9 billion.

Knoxville’s University of Tennessee women’s basketball team won their fourth national championship in 1996.

Dr. Peter Doherty of St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1996 for key discoveries about the immune system.

“Home is a place where a person feels deep within himself that this is a place where he can return to and be comfortable; a place where a person can

feel psychically secure because he is surrounded by positive uplifting things. There is also a spiritualness about home because home addresses almost every need we have, even the ones we may not consciously be aware of.”

Alex Haley, 1986

**1996**

Tennesseans celebrated 200 years of state hood on June 1, 1996.

## **TENNESSEE BICENTENNIAL CAPITOL MALL CODA**

We ask that you honor and cherish this exalted, ancient earth now call Tennessee, a perennial frontier. We hope that those of you who labor after us will find her brimming with beauty preserved and promise fulfilled. We ask that you hold in sacred trust her people, animals, plants, rocks, rivers, and soil.

We who have labored here within a centennial tradition encourage you to find your place within this legacy.

Make your mark.

If Tennessee is a song, she is a traditional hymn, sung in a harmony of voices, that sings of “what is past, or passing, or to come.”

F. Lynne Bachleda for the  
Tennessee State Museum

This monument sings of Tennessee. There are many of us who labored here, most of us anonymously. Some of us can trace our ancestry in this state for centuries; some of us were only passing through.

We all have labored with our hearts, hands, and minds to bring you this Tennessee and this bicentennial tribute to her.

We ask that your assemble here in peaceful diversity, We ask that you look to the capitol to know and to remember that this government is your government to challenge and to change for right. We ask that you choose wisely your leaders to act upon the will of the majorities and to protect the rights of the minorities.

“Let us open Tennessee’s third proud century of state hood. Let us go forward into the undiscovered country that is our future, and make it a welcome home for us all.”

Governor Don Sundquist, 1996,  
under whose administration the Tennessee  
Bicentennial Capitol Mall was completed.

“Tennessee’s first two hundred years represent a proud past we can all learn from and the beginning of a future without limit.”

Governor Ned McWherter, 1996,  
under whose administration the  
Tennessee Bicentennial Capitol Mall was  
initiated.